



UNITED NATIONS STAFF UNION

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Staff Speak Out on Professional Salaries and Pensionable Remuneration of General Service & Related Categories

On Tuesday, 6 August, at a well attended extraordinary general meeting of the Staff Union, the New York staff unanimously adopted two resolutions, one on Professional salaries and one on the pensionable remuneration of the General Service and Related Categories (see Annex).

The Union President opened the meeting with the following statement:

"...As President of the New York Staff Union, and as President of CCISUA, I should like to welcome to this meeting Ed Freeman, President of FICSA. I welcome also the new relations between FICSA and CCISUA, which together represent the international civil service in its entirety.

Also with us today are Omar Abou Zahr, First Vice-President of CCISUA and President of the UNOG Staff Association, and Jeff Dimetros, Second Vice-President of CCISUA and President of the Field Service Staff Union. I welcome them and the other CCISUA and FICSA officers who are present.

We have invited to this meeting the staff of the UNICEF Global Association and of UNDP-UNFPA, which is a member of FICSA. The Chairman of the UNDP-UNFPA Staff Council, Richard Olver, is present.

The fact is that the conditions of service of all staff, members of CCISUA and FICSA alike, are threatened regardless of category or duty station. It is therefore crucial that we work together in our efforts to ensure that our conditions of service suffer no further erosion, that we get fair and adequate pensions following our years of service to the Organization, and that staff and pensioners in all parts of the world are swiftly and adequately compensated for increases in the cost of living.

Yesterday, as President of CCISUA, I said the following to the International Civil Service Commission:

STAFF COMMITTEE BULLETIN

'It is no secret to anyone that there are clear signs of unrest among the staff of the organizations of the common system. This is because in recent years we have witnessed a general deterioration in our conditions of service. The salaries and pensions of all categories of staff are under threat at a time of increasing United Nations activity. As our workload has increased, our benefits have shrunk. The staff are alarmed at the largely subjective approach to our salary systems. We expect a scientific approach, in which data is gathered from appropriate sources and applied objectively, and we also expect the staff representatives to play a meaningful role in the process.

'The international civil service cannot expect to attract candidates of the high standards required by the Charter if benefits do not match requirements. If the common system has difficulty attracting people with the required qualifications, as it often does, there must be a reason. If certain Member States have to offer supplementary payments to persuade their nationals to join the service - which is, of course, incompatible with the Charter and, as we have said, unacceptable to CCISUA - there must be a reason. Yet, interestingly enough, those who engage in such practices are quick to say - unjustly we submit - that we are overpaid. If the organizations are to attract, retain and motivate qualified staff, the Member States must be prepared to pay the price.'

At the recent meeting of the Joint Staff Pension Board in Paris, CCISUA and FICSA united in protesting threats against our salaries and pensions. A trainload of Geneva staff arrived in Paris to join in the protests. Other staff came from Vienna, Rome and other duty stations. I believe it was the first such manifestation of staff unity in the history of the United Nations.

As it happens, the results of the Board's meetings were largely satisfactory. Participants seemed unanimous in that regard. But it remains to be seen if the International Civil Service Commission and the Fifth Committee will accept the Board's recommendations.

CCISUA and FICSA are drawing up contingency plans for possible demonstrations during the forthcoming session of the General Assembly, because we believe manifestations of staff concern may well be necessary. Please keep an eye open for announcements of meetings, and be ready to attend on short notice.

If expressions of discontent are called for, if demonstrations are needed, we shall not shy away from them. But we will never forget the interests of the Organization we serve.

Our interests as individuals are not separate from those of the Organization. After all, what we are seeking is justice, equality and conditions of work that accord with our high responsibilities.

We are united in at least one respect: we are all under threat. Let us be united also in our determination to counter that threat."

RESOLUTION ON PROFESSIONAL SALARIES

The New York staff,

Mindful of the substantial loss of purchasing power suffered by staff in the Professional and Higher Categories as a result of the 1984 to 1988 pay freeze, a loss which has only been partially recovered,

Deeply concerned by the possibility of another freeze starting in November this year,

Welcoming the ACC statement of April 1991 that it would be "wholly inappropriate for a measure to be taken which would freeze United Nations Common System emoluments in 1991 even for a short duration",

1. Decides to resist firmly any new freeze in Professional pay;
2. Calls upon the International Civil Service Commission to take all measures within its power to avoid a freeze;
3. Urges the ICSC to reaffirm its recommendation to the General Assembly that the averaging of the UN/US remuneration margin at 115 over 5 years be abandoned to allow for more flexible margin management;
4. Invites all parties involved in the determination of Professional salaries to devise means for restoring within the next three years the purchasing power lost during the last freeze;
5. Requests that the NY based Staff Committees and Councils to keep this issue under review and to prepare, in consultation with CCISUA and FICSA, for possible joint staff action during the forthcoming General Assembly session.

Adopted unanimously

RESOLUTION ON PENSIONABLE REMUNERATION OF THE
GENERAL SERVICE & RELATED CATEGORIES

The New York staff,

Alarmed at proposals of alternative methodologies to establish the pensionable remuneration of General Service and Related Categories which will effectively lower pension benefits and gross salaries,

Having been informed of the various alternatives being considered and having found none which proposed a better solution than the methodology currently in place,

Noting also the recent recommendations of the Pension Board that the current methodology should continue to apply,

1. Instructs all New York based Staff Committees and the participants' representatives on the Pension Board to resist any move to reduce the pensions of the General Service and Related Categories;
2. Urges the ICSC to follow the recommendations of the Pension Board by retaining the current methodology;
3. Rejects the proposed staff assessment scale as unacceptable and call for its immediate review;
4. Requests the New York based Staff Committees to keep this issue under review and to prepare, in consultation with CCISUA and FICSA, for possible joint staff action during the forthcoming General Assembly.

Adopted unanimously